Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for use in a computer system for responding to received electronic messages, the method comprising:

(a) receiving, at a computer system, an incoming electronic message addressed to a general message account not assigned to any specific user;

(b) identifying, by the computer system, stored fact information that is related to and external to the incoming electronic message such that subsequent analysis of the stored fact information provides an indication of how to route the incoming electronic message, wherein identifying comprises:

(i) upon receipt of [[an]] the incoming electronic message in [[a]] the computer system, selecting a first meta information from a plurality of meta information portions based on information retrieved from the incoming electronic message, wherein each meta information includes a rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, wherein:

(A) the fact attribute specifies a pre-selected class of stored fact information that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein the stored fact information is external to the incoming electronic message, and

(B) the rule is associated with an action performed by the computer system with regard to the incoming electronic message when the rule is met by the pre-selected class of stored fact information specified by the fact attribute;

(ii) accessing at least the first meta information of the plurality of meta information portions stored in the computer system, the first meta information including a first rule and a first fact attribute;

(iii) determining a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information from the first fact attribute and a first service of a plurality of services from the first fact attribute, wherein the first service is specified by the first fact attribute and includes executable instructions for retrieving at least a first portion of the first pre-selected class of stored fact information;

(c) retrieving, by the computer system, at least part of the identified stored fact information in preparation for the subsequent analysis to determine how to route the incoming electronic message, by retrieving at least the first portion of the stored fact information that is a member of the first pre-selected class using the first service; and

(d) storing, by the computer system, the retrieved stored fact information for subsequent analysis to determine how to route the incoming electronic message by storing the first retrieved portion of the stored fact information in a markup language formatted electronic file that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein such that the markup language formatted electronic file is configured to permit the first rule to be subsequently [[is]] applied to the first retrieved portion to determine how to route the incoming electronic message.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first portion of the stored fact information is retrieved when there is a need to apply the rule.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the computer system includes a workflow for processing the incoming electronic message and wherein the method further comprises providing the electronic file with a lifetime bound to the workflow.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic file is an XML document and the retrieved portion is stored in the XML document using an XSL transaction.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising performing an initial screening of the incoming electronic message before accessing the meta information, wherein a result of the initial screening is used to select the first rule from a plurality of rules.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the meta information further includes an identifier specifying where the retrieved first portion of stored fact information is to be stored in the electronic file, and wherein the identifier is used in storing the retrieved first portion.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising using the identifier to access the retrieved first portion of stored fact information in the electronic file to apply the first rule to the retrieved first portion.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the identifier is an XPath query.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the retrieved first portion of the stored fact information pertains to at least one category selected from the group consisting of: a business context of the incoming electronic message, analytical data relating to the incoming electronic message, availability of a person for attending to the incoming electronic message, a skill of a person for attending to the incoming electronic message, communication information relating to the incoming electronic message, an industry with which the incoming electronic message is associated, and combinations thereof.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer program product tangibly embodied in a computer readable storage medium and containing executable instructions that when executed cause a processor to perform operations comprising:

      (a) receiving, at a computer system, an incoming electronic message addressed to a general message account not assigned to any specific user;

      (b) identifying, by the computer system, stored fact information that is related to and

external to the incoming electronic message such that subsequent analysis of the stored fact information provides an indication of how to route the incoming electronic message, wherein identifying comprises:

(i) upon receipt of [[an]] the incoming electronic message in [[a]] the computer system, selecting a first meta information from a plurality of meta information portions based on information retrieved from the incoming electronic message, wherein each meta information includes a rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, wherein:

(A) the fact attribute specifies a pre-selected class of stored fact information that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein the stored fact information is external to the incoming electronic message, and

(B) the rule is associated with an action performed by the computer system with regard to the incoming electronic message when the rule is met by the pre-selected class of stored fact information specified by the fact attribute;

(ii) accessing the first meta information stored in the computer system, the first meta information including a first rule and a first fact attribute;

(iii) determining a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information from the first fact attribute and a first service of a plurality of services from the first fact attribute, wherein the first service is specified by the first fact attribute and includes executable instructions for retrieving at least a first portion of the first pre-selected class of stored fact information;

(b) retrieving, by the computer system, at least part of the identified stored fact information in preparation for the subsequent analysis to determine how to route the incoming electronic message, by retrieving at least the first portion of the stored fact information that is a member of the first pre-selected class using the first service; and

(c) storing, by the computer system, the retrieved stored fact information for subsequent analysis to determine how to route the incoming electronic message by storing the first retrieved portion of the stored fact information in a markup language formatted electronic file that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein such that the markup language

formatted electronic file is configured to permit the first rule to be subsequently [[is]] applied to
the first retrieved portion to determine how to route the incoming electronic message.

12. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the first portion
of the stored fact information is retrieved when there is a need to apply the rule.

13. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the computer
system includes a workflow for processing the incoming electronic message, and wherein the
operations further comprise:
providing the electronic file with a lifetime bound to the workflow.

14. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 11, the operations further
comprising:
        performing an initial screening of the incoming electronic message before accessing first
the meta information; and
        using a result of the initial screening to select the first rule from a plurality of rules.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:
        an electronic messaging system in which an incoming electronic message addressed to a
general message account not assigned to any specific user is received;
        a first repository with stored fact information that is external to the incoming electronic
message, wherein the stored fact information is configured to be subsequently analyzed to
provide an indication of how to route the incoming electronic message;
        a second repository with meta information that identifies a first pre-selected class of a
plurality of classes of the stored fact information; and
        a program product tangibly embodied in a computer readable storage medium and
including executable instructions that when executed cause the computer system, upon receipt of
the incoming electronic message, [[1]] (a) to identify a portion of the stored fact information that

is related to and external to the incoming electronic message such that subsequent analysis of the stored fact information provides an indication of how to route the incoming electronic message, wherein identifying comprises the computer system being caused: (i) to select a first meta information from a plurality of meta information portions based on information retrieved from the incoming electronic message, wherein each meta information includes a rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, wherein: (A) the fact attribute specifies a pre-selected class of stored fact information that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein stored fact information is external to the incoming electronic message, and (B) the rule is associated with an action performed by the computer system with regard to the incoming electronic message when the rule is met by the pre-selected class of stored fact information specified by the fact attribute, [[2]] (ii) to access the first meta information in the second repository, the first meta information including a first rule and a first fact attribute, [[3]] (iii) to determine determining the first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information from the first fact attribute and a first service of a plurality of services from the first fact attribute, wherein the first service is specified by the first fact attribute and includes executable instructions for retrieving at least a first portion of the first pre-selected class of stored fact information, [[4]] (b) to retrieve at least part of the identified stored fact information in preparation for the subsequent analysis to determine how to route the incoming electronic message, by retrieving at least the first portion of the stored fact information from the first repository using the first service, the retrieved portion being a member of the first pre-selected class, and [[5]] (c) to store the retrieved stored fact information for subsequent analysis to determine how to route the incoming electronic message by storing the first retrieved portion in a markup language formatted electronic file that is associated with the incoming electronic message, wherein such that the markup language formatted file is configured to permit the first rule to be subsequently [[is]] applied to the first retrieved portion to determine how to route the incoming electronic message.

16. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 15, wherein the executable instructions further cause the computer system to retrieve the first portion of the stored fact information when there is a need to apply the rule.

17. (Original) The computer system of claim 15, further comprising a workflow for processing the incoming electronic message, wherein the electronic file has a lifetime bound to the workflow.

18. (Original) The computer system of claim 15, wherein the electronic file is an XML document and the retrieved portion is stored in the XML document using an XSL transaction.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 15, wherein the meta information further includes an identifier specifying where the retrieved first portion of stored fact information is to be stored in the electronic file, and wherein the executable instructions cause the computer system to use the identifier in storing the retrieved first portion.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 20, wherein the executable instructions cause the computer system to use the identifier in accessing the retrieved first portion of stored fact information to apply the first rule to the retrieved portion.

22. (Original) The computer system of claim 20, wherein the identifier is an XPath query.

23. (Withdrawn) A method of configuring a computer system for responding to received electronic messages, the method comprising:

receiving an input in a computer system, the input identifying a first user-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information to be retrieved upon receipt in the computer system of at least one incoming electronic message; and

storing, in a repository that is accessed upon receipt of the incoming electronic message, meta information that identifies the first user-selected class such that a portion of the stored fact information that is a member of the first user-selected class can be retrieved upon accessing the meta information.

24. (Withdrawn) A computer program product containing executable instructions that when executed cause a processor to perform operations comprising:

receive an input in a computer system, the input identifying a first user-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information to be retrieved upon receipt in the computer system of at least one incoming electronic message; and

store, in a repository that is accessed upon receipt of the incoming electronic message, meta information that identifies the first user-selected class such that a portion of the stored fact information that is a member of the first user-selected class can be retrieved upon accessing the meta information.